

Message Text

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73

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 AID-05 /080 W

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R 231408Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4575

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 6116

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS PINT ET

SUBJECT: PRESSURES IN AND ON THE DIRG

REFS: (A) ADDIS 5111 AND PREVIOUS; (B) USDAO 23/1030Z MAY 75;

(C) ADDIS 6056; (D) ADDIS 6057

1. ON MAY 20 THE EMBASSY RECEIVED A REPORT THAT AT LEAST FIVE PERSONS HAD BEEN ARRESTED OVER THE PREVIOUS WEEKEND IN CONNECTION WITH THE SO-CALLED NEGUSSIE PLOT (REF A). NO CONFIRMATION OR FURTHER DETAILS, SUCH AS NAMES, CHARGES, DISPOSITION OF THE PRISONERS, ETC., HAVE BECOME AVAILABLE SINCE. ON MAY 23 WE LEARNED OF THE ARREST OF FIVE PERSONS THE PREVIOUS DAY ON SIMILAR GROUNDS. THE SOURCE STATED THAT THESE INCLUDED LT. "HAILE" MARU, ARMY; (A LT. MELESS MARU WAS FORMER PMAC LIAISON OFF WITH LTG AMAN. WE ARE CHECKING WHETHER HAILE AND MELESS ARE THE SAME); SECOND LT. AYELE YIGLETU AND PRIVATE TADESSE SAMENNA, BOTH OF THE POLICE; AND TWO UNNAMED WOMEN RELATIVES OF THE WIDOW OF GENERAL KEBEDE

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GUEBRE, EXECUTED ON NOVEMBER 23. WE CONCLUDE THAT THE PLOT ISSUE REMAINS VERY MUCH ALIVE.

2. A GREAT MANY OF OUR ETHIOPIAN CONTACTS ARE, MOREOVER, TELLING EMBASSY OFFICERS IN CASUAL CONVERSATION OF CONTINUING SEVERE STRESSES WITHIN THE DIRG. A RECURRING THEME IN DIRG DISCUSSIONS, ACCORDING TO THESE INTERLOCUTORS, IS THE QUESTION OF THE DISPOSITION OF THE POLITICAL HOSTAGES, WITH RADICAL ELEMENTS REPORTEDLY ASSERTING THAT OPPOSITION TO THE DIRG WILL CONTINUE TO GROW UNTIL THESE POLITICAL PRISONERS ARE KILLED (CF REF B). EVIDENTLY, THIS RADICAL THESIS IS STILL ENCOUNTERING RESISTANCE, BUT IT DOES NOTHING TO LESSEN THE MALAISE IN THE URBAN MIDDLE CLASS VIS-A-VIS THE DIRG.

3. AS THIS IS BEING WRITTEN, EVIDENCE OF CONSIDERABLE WORKER DISSATISFACTION WITH THE DIRG'S DECISION TO CLOSE CELU HEADQUARTERS CONTINUES TO COME IN (REFS C AND D). IT SEEMS THAT DIRG DELEGATES ADDRESSING DIRE DAWA COTTON WORKERS RECEIVED STRONG EXPRESSIONS OF OPPOSITION ON THIS ISSUE. WE HEAR THAT AT MITCHELL COTTS, DIRG MEMBERS WERE GIVEN THE SILENT TREATMENT DURING THEIR ENTIRE EXPOSITION. NO QUESTIONS WERE ASKED THEREAFTER, BUT WHEN THE DELEGATES LEFT THE MEETING THEY DID SO TO THE SHOUTS OF MITCHELL COTTS' WORKERS, WHO YELLED "REOPEN THE (CELU) BUILDING*" THERE IS TALK OF STRIKES AND DEMONSTRATIONS BY MILITANT UNION MEMBERS NEXT WEEK.

4. A SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS, AT LEAST IN HARAR, DESSIE AND ADDIS ABABA, ARE BOYCOTTING CLASSES TODAY TO CONTINUE THE EXPRESSION OF THEIR DISSATISFACTION WITH DIRG AUTHORITARIANISM.

5. REPORTS ARE ALSO IN HAND OF AN ALLEGED NEW MASSACRE OF (APPROXIMATELY 500) ERITREAN CIVILIANS IN A VILLAGE NORTH OF OM HAJJER. THESE ARE STILL UNCONFIRMED RPT UNCONFIRMED, BUT IF THEY HAVE SUBSTANCE THEY WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THE UNORGANIZED DISSATISFACTION WITH THE DIRG CURRENTLY PARTICULARLY NOTICEABLE IN THE CAPITAL.

6. THESE ARE BUT SOME OF THE ISSUES AND PRESSURES SWIRLING THROUGH AND ABOUT THE DIRG AT THIS TIME. AS THE DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, THERE ARE OTHERS (BEING REPORTED SEPARATELY). THEY ADD UP, IN OUR OPINION, TO YET ANOTHER PHASE OF PARTICULAR
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STRESS AND INSTABILITY.
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